

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Prior to entry of this response, Claims 1-20 were pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 11, 18, and 20 are independent. In the Final Office Action dated August 25, 2008, Claims 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph and Claims 1-17 were allowed. Following this response, Claims 1-17 and 21-23 remain in this application, with Claims 18-20 have being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and new Claims 21-23 being added by this Amendment. Applicants hereby address the Examiner's rejections in turn.

I. Interview Summary

Applicants thank Examiner Gauthier for the courtesy of a telephone interview on September 24, 2008, requested by the undersigned to discuss the rejection of the current claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112 and the patentability of the new claims. During the interview, the Examiner stated that the current claims are allowable.

II. Rejection of Claims 18-20 Under 35 U.S.C. §112, First Paragraph

In the Office Action dated August 25, 2008, the Examiner rejected Claims 18-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way to reasonably convey to one skilled in the art, at the time the application was filed, that the inventor had possession of the claimed invention. Claims 18-20 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer rendering this rejection moot.

III. New Claims

Claims 21-23 have been added to more distinctly define and to round out the protection for the invention to which Applicants are entitled. Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable over the cited art and that they add no new matter.

IV. Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment After Final be entered by the Examiner, placing the claims in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully submit that the proposed amendments of the claims do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Finally, Applicants respectfully submit that the entry of the Amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims, as amended, are patentable over the cited references. The preceding arguments are based only on the arguments in the Official Action, and therefore do not address patentable aspects of the invention that were not addressed by the Examiner in the Official Action. The claims may include other elements that are not shown, taught, or suggested by the cited art. Accordingly, the preceding argument in favor of patentability is advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability. Furthermore, the Final Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Final Office Action.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this amendment and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 13-2725.

Respectfully submitted,
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